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THE
SPLENDOR
OF THE
SPOUSE.

A SERMON Preached in the Parish
Church of WARE, Anno Domini,
1638.

By
AUGUSTINE HILL, Rector of Denzey, in the
County of ESSEX.

BERN. *Pascimur & patimur.*

AUG. *Vsq̃ue ad hujus seculi finem inter persecutiones mundi
& consolationes Dei procurrit Ecclesia.*

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TO
THE HONORABLE SIR

THOMAS FANSHAW

Knight of the Bath, his
Majesties Remembrancer in
the Court of Exchequer.

SIR,



T was the greatestt happinesse that
ever did befall me, that I was assumed
into your noble Family where I was fur-
nished once, and a second time likewise
with Ecclesiasticall promotions, without
any deserts, yea little or none attendance. A true
Friend is decyphered to be an Angell clothed with
flesh and blood, such have you beene to me, the most
carefull and faithfull friend that ever poore Scholler
had. Comming to pay my annuall tribute of thanke-
fulnesse, a Sermon, it pleased you to accept of it, and
to cast a respecttive eye more then ordinary towards me
for it, though there be nothing in it to be affected, and
in my selfe no affectation at all of it, but rather an in-
dignation against mine owne imbecillity and endow-
ments that I was not able to speake of those heavenly
things

The Epistle Dedicatorie.

things in that manner as might raise my hearers to divine cogitations. What weight there is in it comes from your ballance and favourable construction, for it was handled in plaine familiar words, rather to expresse clearly the matter, then to hunt for polished phrases, and my desire is more to speake fortia quam diserta, as Saint Hierome saith, things of strength then eloquence, and rather vivere then loqui, as Minutius Felix observes, to live, then speake them.

But I am a man compassed with infirmity, 'tis truly said of me, my bodily presence is weake, and my speech contemptible, 2 Corin. 10. 10. But such was your sweet disposition that you still cast a mantle upon mine infirme carriage, which hath engaged my heart in a more thankfull observance towards your worthy selfe. In testimony whereof I present to you this poore Sermon as a publique Record, that to your Noble Family I owe my selfe, and from thence have received all the livelyhood and meanes of subsistence which I now enjoy, my loynes and bowels blesse you continually. The Lord encrease upon you the blessings of heaven above, the blessings of the deepe that lyeth under, the blessings of the breasts and of the wombe, Gen. 49. 25: and the good will of him that dwelt in the bush dwell with you for ever, are the prayers of

Yours most thankfully

and humbly devoted,

AUG. HILL



THE
SPLENDOUR
OF
THE SPOVSE.

CANT: 2. 2.

*As the Lily among Thornes, so is my Love
among the Daughters.*



Have gleaned at this time in *Solomons* Field, and that parcell of his called the Canticles, a Song of Songs, by way of eminency; for though there be many other sacred Songs, as that of *Moses*, of *Deborah* and *Barak*, Exod. 15: Judges 5. and of the sweet Singer of *Israel*, and *Solomons* owne Songs were a thousand and five, *1 Kings* 4. 32. yet this

not onely exceeds all them, but all other mentioned in holy writ. Let me use the words of a truly Divine man. Who can read this Booke with understanding, and not be transported from the world, from himselfe, and be any where save in heaven before his time? there is nothing in it but favours of spirituall exercise and soule ravishment; If I say no more of it, it is sufficient that it is *Solomons*, a man above a man, above himselfe, who being ravished in spirit, and taken up as it

Doctor Hall.

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Ephes. 5. 32.

were into the third heavens, warbled out that sweet affinity and nearness, that is, and shall be betwixt Christ and his Church, that great mysterie as Saint *Paul* calls it. Interpreters are at oddes about the former verse, but agree in this, that it is the voyce of Christ concerning his Church, either describing her present condition amongst others, or preferring her before them, or perswading her how shee ought to demean her selfe amongst them, to retaine her native beauty and sweetness, though shee be beset with never so many thornes.

There is in the Text something positive, something comparative, the positive part is, that the Church is Christ his Love, the other are Daughters, the comparative part takes up the rest of the words.

The positive part shewes the sweet stile and title which Christ gives to his Church; He calls Her Love, and with a happy appropriation, my Love, which is a terme both of propriety and possession. Others which are not the Church are called by the name of Daughters, by which are meant either Forraine Congregations, or such as live within the pale of the visible Church, yet belong not to him, therefore he forbears to challenge his interest in them, and leaves them, to a common appellation, the Daughters, nor my Daughters.

The comparative part hath these things obvious to every eye: First the subjects of this resemblance, the Church is like the Lilly, the others are like Thornes. Secondly, the situation of the resembled parties. The Church is like the Lilly among the Thornes.

The stile which Christ gives his Church is Love. It comes nearest his owne nature, for God is love, it best resembleth his benefites done for her, husbands love your wives as Christ loved his Church, and how he loved it he expresseth in a way beyond humane expression, he gave himselfe for it, he loved it better then he loved himselfe.

1 Iohn 4. 16.
Ephes. 5. 25.

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himselfe. *Dilexisti me magis quam te, quando mori voluisti pro me. Augst.* And it best lets forth the reference she hath to him, as being his Spouse; his Bride. The servant must honour his master, the Disciple must attend for instruction, the wife must love her husband, *amor ab amando, non honorando*, saith Saint Bernard, and he gives these reasons for it, *una utriusque hereditas, una domus, una mensa, unus etiam thorus*, and there is no fitter a union of these then love.

The originall then of the Churches blisse is Christ his love towards her. The first spring of election is love. *Jacob* have I loved, the maine Conduit or Cisterne of Redemption is love. God so loved the world, the streams of vocation and sanctification. I drew thee with the cords of a man, with the bands of love, and the maine Ocean of eternall glory, *In amore hæc insunt omnia*, all is from love. There neither is nor can be any in her to move him to love her, much lesse to deserve his love, not her beauty, she acknowledgeth her selfe black, no *Miriam* more leprous, no polluted *Thamar* more hated in the eyes of an *Amnon* then she in his eyes, when he first tooke liking to her, nor her parentage, for her father was an *Amorite*, her mother a *Hittite*, nor her portion, for what was hers naturally, but sinne and everlasting death the wages of it? nor her parts, for the best child of grace acknowledgeth, In me there dwelleth no manner of thing that is good; all then was in him free and pure love. Now we say *magnes amoris amor*, love hath an attractive power to draw love, therefore let every Spouse of Christ remember to returne love to him againe, that every heart may plead for it selfe, as *Peter* did, *Lord thou knowest that I love thee*. O then let us pitch and settle our affections upon him, who is as Saint Bernard saith, *verè amans & amabilis*, one most truly loving us, and most worthy to be beloved of us: the Apostle pronounceth an extreame *Anathema* to him that failes in

Bernard.

Rom. 9.
John 3. 16.
Hoseah 11. 4.

Can. 1.

Ezekiel 16.

Rom. 7.

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in the retribution of it. If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be *Anathema Maranatha*, and it should be a double engagement of our obedience and thanke : and let us not onely with the inward man love him; but with the outward also honour and confesse him, who pleads for us before his Father in heaven : 'tis but a dead heart that hath a dumbe voyce when Christ his cause is in question : *Canes latrare possunt pro Dominis*; & non vis me latrare pro Christo? saith Saint Jerome to *Ruffinus*, the Dogges will barke for their masters, and wilt thou not have me speake for Christ? and he goes on : *si ista causa discordia est, mori possum, tacere non possum*: if that be the cause of our jarres, I may dye before hold my peace, yea let us so farre as in us lyeth, not suffer him to be blaspheamed by others : it was the zealous resolution of that holy Father. *Ego si patrem, si matrem, si uxorem, si filios, si germanos adversum Christum meum audivissem ista dicentes, quasi rabidus canis blasphemantia ora lacerassem, & fuisset in primis manus mea super eos*: And lastly it should be a double engagement of our obedience and thankfulnessse of our obedience to live unto him who hath so dearly loved us, as to dye for us, and our thankfulnessse may have that heavenly burden of the Saints, *Rev. 1. 5, 6.* To him that hath loved us and washed us from our sinnes in his owne blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.

The word is rendred *Vicina*, my neighbour, adjoining Inhabitant. *Themistocles* having a house to sell, commended it, that it had *bonum vicinum*, a good neighbour; the Churches blisse is, that Christ is pleased to dwell with them, yea in them, and make a resolution as in the *Psalme*, *Here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein*: and not onely *vicina*, but *proxima*, my nearest one, both for counsell and comfort, he revealeth his secrets

1 Cor. 16. 21.

Hev. 7. 27. 31.
cp. 40.

Id. cp. 20.

Psalme, 32.

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crets to them, and is ready at all assayes to helpe them, yea *amica* my friend, as *Abraham* was called the friend of God, *Jac.* 2. 23. He need feare no enemy who hath God to his friend: yet the originall word goes further, for it is taken from feeding or conversing together, and expresseth that inward familiarity and union that is betwixt them. It must teach us all, by no meanes to estrange our selves from Christ, but to keepe a correspondence with him, to cherish our familiarity, friendship, to preserve our union, that we professing him to be ours, he may confesse us to be his, as he doth his Church here, My love, which is a terme both of propriety, and of possession. Of propriety, he claimes a speciall interest in his Church, and he hath a true right in us all, both by making us his at the first, and by buying us againe, when we had made away our selves: his deare purchase we are, therefore let us not alienate our selves from him, either in our affection, for he is the proper and adequate object of our love, *minu cast è te amat, qui aliquid præter te amat, quod non propter te amat*, he loves thee Aug. amisse who loves any thing besides thee, which he loves not in and for thee; nor in our obedience, but wholly devote our selves to him, and him alone, that none may have the honour of our service but he, that abased himselfe to save us. Of possession: he hath a speciall care and custody of his Church, he keeps them as choycely as his jewels, as the apple of his owne eye, he keeps their head as with a shield, that not a haire of it shall perish: yea their very feet, that they dash them not against a stone.

By the Daughters are meant either forraigne Congregations, as the Daughter of Babylon, or else (as I conceive) such as live within the Pale of the visible Church, enjoy the same holy Word and Sacraments, which the elect Spouse of Christ doth, yet are they Thornes to his Lily: *Spina propter malignitatem morum, filia propter Sa-*
Psalme 137.

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Aug. Vincentio
Epist. 48.
11, in P. 36.

2 Cor. 11. 16.

1 John 2. 19.

Rom. 2.

Tertul.

Mat. 7.

cramentorum communionem: eadem professio, sed non idem cor, saith the same Father, they have the same profession, but not the same heart, therefore the more dangerous, *Mali Christiani tanto nocentiores quanto interiores inimici*, saith Saint August. Tom. 4. *De fide rerum invisibilium*, if that worke be his, the more inward enemies the more hurtfull. Saint Bernard descanting of the Churches complaint of her bitterness, saith she was *amara prius in nece martyrum, amarior postea in conflictu hereticorum, amarissima in moribus domesticorum*: bitter first in the death of her Martyrs, more bitter in succeeding ages in her concertation with Heretikes, most bitter in these last times in the corrupt manners of them of her owne household, Saint Paul speaks of peris among false brethren, and Saint John of some, they went out from us, but they were not of us, they are not all Israel which are of Israel, Rom. 9. 6. And he is a Jew which is one inwardly. Our Saviour mentions some that come in sheeps clothing, *Quantum sunt isti pelles ovium, nisi nominis Christiani extrinsecus superficies*, they have the name but not the nature of Christians, their habit shewes them to be Daughters of Jerusalem, but in heart they are but Daughters of Babylon, therefore Christ leaves them to a common appellation, not gracing them with his appropriating terme, *my*. Those whom Christ ownes not here he will deny hereafter, and though they be never so nigh him, and enjoy all the outward priviledges of the Church, yet *non novi vos*, is their doome: depart from me, I know you not.

So I retaine from the Goats to the Sheepe, the Church of Christ here compared to a Lily, for as the Lily doth open her selfe to receive the bright rayes and influences of the shining Sunne: so doth the Church open her heart and affections to admit the heat and spirituall vigour of that Sunne of rightcousnesse; and againe as the Lily shuts and closeth her selfe for her custody and safety

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so doth the Church contract and collect herselfe close together in a holy care and vigilancy to preserve herselfe from the rage and violence of temptations: and further as the Lily is alwayes greene, and changeth not her hew: so ought the Christian to be constant and immutable in holy duties. I will not presse the comparison too farre, onely touch the choyce and most usefull parts of the resemblance.

Saint Bernard observes two speciall qualities wherein the Church doth resemble the Lily, *propter candorem & odorem*, the whitenesse in colour and the sweetnesse of smell.

1. Whitenes, that is purity, & integrity of conscience, 2 Cor. 1. 12.
Saint Paul stile it simplicity and godly sincerity, in this respect is the Church said to be all faire, in regard of inward sincerity, that admits not the staine of blacke and foule hypocrisie, that let all us the children of the Church labour to be like our mother in this divine quality. Innocency is the badge, the true character of Christians. *Innocentiam proficetur qui Christum proficetur*, as Erasmus, Christianity is a profession composed of innocency. Saint Bernard observes that a Christian of all beasts is resembled to the Lambe, of all birds to the Dove, of all trees to the Vine, of all flowers to the Lily, because the morall predominant quality of them all is innocency, and this whitenesse is the genuine colour of our wedding garment in heaven, and in this life on earth, for the Saints above are described so clad, Rev. 7. 9. And holy David sets them out in the same habit, Psal. 24. He that hath cleane hands and a pure heart, and here below our true cognisance is purity and uprightnesse of hearts joyned with hands as white as snow in *Salomon*, for innocency, that no injustice may cleave unto our fingers, then shall we be like Christ our Master, in whom was no fault found nor guile in his mouth, and the issue shall be happy, we shall have peace at the last. Psalm. 37.

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2. Odour or sweetnesse, the fragraney of the Lily is admirable in pleasing the senses, and with the sweet smell thereof rejoycing the heart, so let there be in spirituall Lilies the odour of a good life which may smell sweet in the nostrils of God and man: of God, that he may testifie of us, as *Isaac* did of *Jacob*: The smell of my sonne is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed. Of man, that as *Saint Paul* saith, we may be the savour of Christ his knowledge in every place, that our name may be *unguentum effusum*, oyntment powred forth, and as Christ his fame went through all the Region round about, so may the fame of our sanctity and justice be spread in those coasts where we abide, and as the Boxe of Spiknard, wherewith *Mary* anoynted Christ filled the house with the odour of the oyntment: so the favour of our gracious actions may fill the places where we live, then may be the Lily for sweetnesse and fragraney. A later Divine notes two other qualites wherein the Church should be like the Lily.

First, in abundant fertility; for as he out of *Pliny*; *Lilio nihil est fecundius*, nothing is more fruitfull then the Lily, nor ought to be then a Christian, who should be like those sheep whereof every one beareth twins, or like the tree of life, which beareth twelve manner of fruits. Grace admits not of a windy emptinesse, but the wisdom that comes from above is full of mercy and good fruits, and *Saint Paul* prays for the *Philippians*; that they might be filled with the fruits of righteousness; nor of beggerly poverty, but Christians must be rich in faith, rich in good workes. Barrennesse or fruitfulness not answerable to the bestowed cost, is accursed; there is not the same expectation of the Lily that growes of it selfe in the field, without the art and industry of man, and of that in the Garden which is planted, manured and dressed with kindly husbandry. Certainely unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required;

Gen. 27. 27.

2 Cor. 2.

Cant. 1. 3.

Luc. 4. 14.

John 12. 3

Zanath Hos. 14.

Cant. 4. 2.

Revel. 22. 2.

Iac. 3. 17.

Phil. 1. 11.

Iac. 2. 5.

1 Tim. 6. 18.

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red, and they which receive five or two talents, must returne a proportionable advantage: where God sowes a *Gomer*, he will not be content at the harvest to reape an *Ephah*. Labour we then (my brethren) to abound in the worke of the Lord, to make accounts agreeable to our receipts, that so we may answer the blessing, patience, and expectation of our Master: and the fruite of this abundant fruitfulness shall be, that an *ance* shall be ministred unto us abundantly into the everlasting Kingdome of our Lord and Saviour Iesus Christ. 2 Pet. 1. 11.

Secondly, in a mature and seasonable fructification: as soone as the Spring comes, that the Sunne yeelds a nourishing heat, the sweet influences of the Pleiades are loosed, the earth openeth her wombe, and the warm showres and dewes doe distill upon it, that it is the time of vegetation; the Lily stayes not but immediatly begins to shoot and shew her selfe in fruitfulness: so must spirituall Lilies doe, take the very first tender and offer of grace, and readily obey the motions of Gods Spirit: when Gods voyce speakes as in the 27. *Psa*. seeke ye my face, our hearts may eccho to it againe. Thy face Lord will I seeke, *Primitia Deo*, the first fruits are firstest for the oblation of the Highest, the first borne for his service, his soule desires the first ripe fruit, the choycest tree: of Gods Orchard are Palmes and Cedars, Psal. 92. 11. Palmes bring fruit betimes, and flourish abundantly, and Cedars they last v.ry long. O take we heed of quenching those blessed motions which Gods Spirit breathes into our soules, of resisting the holy-Ghost, of receiving the grace of God in vaine: depend not too much upon latter raines, and lateward Springs, but when his wind blowes upon our garden, let the spices thereof flow out: then shall we be like the tree planted by the water side, that brings forth his fruit in due season, yea like the Lily here in the Text. 2 Cor. 6. 1.
Cant. 4. 16.
Psal. 1. 3.

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And now be pleased to cast but your eye upon the Daughters in the comparative part, and then we will view them as they are together, the Lily among the Thornes.

They are like the Thornes,

1. For their noxious quality hurtfull to every thing that toucheth them, they will wound and teare not only the garment but the flesh it selfe: I will teare your flesh with the Thornes of the wilderness: yea they will putrifie the flesh where they are hidden: so are wicked men full of cruelty, rapine, malignity, yea a secret venom they have which empoysons and corrupts whatsoever they adhere unto. The Prophet describing the generall and desperate pravity of Prince and people, thus seemes to aggravate it; The best of them is a bryar, the most upright is sharper then a thorne-hedge: and the blessing promised to Israel was this: There shall be no more a pricking bryar unto the house of Israel, nor any grieving thorne of all that are round about them.

Judges 8. 7.

Micah. 7. 4.

Ezek. 28. 24.

2. For their sterility and barrenesse of fruit, they bring forth nothing immediatly profitable unto man. In the ninth Chapter of *Judges*, there is mention made of the Olives sarnesse, the Fig-trees sweetnesse, the Vines refreshing and chearing, yet nothing of the thorne and bramble, but unparallelled ambition, pride, dissention, that ends in utter ruine, and destruction, yea they are causes of barrenesse in others, they make the best soyle and the most fruitfull Land barren: so are evill men unprofitable themselves, and make others good for nothing, like the Pharises who compasse Sea and Land to make a Prof. lite, and when he is made, they make him twofold more the child of hell then themselves.

Mat. 23. 15.

Heb. 6. 8.

Math. 25.

Lastly, for their end, for as of thornes the end is to be burned; so everlasting fire is the issue of all sinfull courses, where they shall receive their just and deserved meede

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meede in that Lake that burnes with fire and brimstone forever, where we will leave them, and come to speake of the Church her mixture with them here in this life, as being a Lily among the thornes.

As the Lily among Thornes, so is my Love among the Daughters.

1. Saint *Jerome* expounds it, *De Ecclesia Gentium quæ a velle medio remedio infidelium & non credentium quasi* *Hier. in Cant.*
ex spinis emerferit, God doth select and picke out his Church of the Gentiles from among unbelcevers, as a Lily out of a great heape of thornes, so in the Prophet, *I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness, where no man* *Hoseah, 9. 10.*
expected them, yea God doth finie us like Lilies among thornes. but even when we are very thornes as hortfull, as unfruitfull, as fit for the fire as they, till God of thornes make us Lilies, therefore let us glorifie the riches of his grace, and set forth the prayse of him who hath changed our disposition, made us innocent, pleasing to himselfe, profitable to others, and shall be one day transplanted into his Celestiall Paradise.

2. Saint *Austin* understands it of the mixture of good and bad in the visible Church, Lily and Thornes *Aug. in Ps. 99.*
promiscuously growing together, so that the Church is like *Rebeccahs* wombe, two severall Nations are in it, like *Noahs* Arke, that hath cleane and uncleane beasts in it, like Saint *Peters* net, which gathered fish and rubbish, like the *Samaritans* Inn: entertaines all manner of guests: wheate and chaffe in one floore, meale and branne in one lumpe: and Saint *Paul* saith, in a great house there are not onely vessels of gold and silver, but of wood and stone, some to honour, and some to dishonour. Saint *Bernard* saith, *Tria sunt loca*, there be three *2 Tim. 2. 20.*
places, heaven, hell, and earth, & each of these hath his *Ber. Sen.*
severall

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everall Inhabitants : Heaven hath none : but good , hell none but bad, the earth hath good and bad mixed together. Saint *Austin* seemes to apply it briefly, thus,

Aug. loc. cit.

1 Kings 19. 18.
Revel 1. 4.

Isa. 49. 21.

August.

1. *Quomodo consolaris?* how dost thou comfort thy Church, (O Lord) against the multitude of ungodly men? she may seeme to despaire when she sees such thickers of thornes, as if all was turned to a wildernesse, yet there is hope for her in this, *sunt grana inter paleam, est Lilium inter spinas*, There be some graines of corne amongst the great heapes of chaffe, and a Lily among the multitude of thornes. Thus God cheares up *Elijah* in his grievous complaint, I have left me seven thousand that have not bowed the knee to *Baal*, and the Prophet tells the people, there is a remnant, and there be a few names in *Sardis*, *Mathew* and *Zachey* among the Publicanes, the Centurion among the Souldiers, *Mary Magdalene* among the harlots. Therefore though we doe grieve as he saith, mourne that the wayes of *Sion* want passengers, yet let us not mourne as *Rachel* for her children, refusing to be comforted because they were not, nor sorrow as they that are without hope. Doubtlesse many shall come from the East and from the West, and sit downe with *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob* in that blessed Kingdome above, though we be not privy to the places they have there, nor to their going thither, the Church herselfe saith, in admiration of her encreased number, who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive and remooving to and fro? and who hath brought up these? behold I was left alone, these where had they beene? And take we heed of over sullen censures, least we condemne the generation of Gods children, and take them for thornes which were Lilies, *De nullo pronuntiandum est.*

2. *Quomodo confortas?* How dost thou strengthen us against the temptations of *Satan* and the seductions of

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of wicked men? when thou tellest us thy Church is and continueth a Lily though amongst never so many thorns, she is (as I have already said) in a speciall manner in Christ his care and custody, in his hands, and none shall be able to plucke her thence; built upon a rocke, and remaines like mount *Sion* immoveable.

Psal. 135.

3. *Quomodo terres?* How dost thou affright us with the consideration of our dangerous and militant condition here on earth, that we are beset with thornes, plainly in *Ezekiels* case, byrars and thornes are with us, and we dwell among Scorpions, and as God left the *Canaanites* to be pricks in the eyes, and thornes in the sides of Israel to reach them warre. *Judges 3. 2.* So hath he left us enemies to traine us up in our military profession of Christianity.

Ezekiel, 2. 6.

4. That which is opposite to the scope of his exposition, and of the Text it selfe, is to perswade us, *Tolera-
re malos*; to be content to beare with and forbear them that be evill, for God himselfe hath said, that the eares shall not onely be, but grow among the wheat, untill the Harvest; and the bad shall be amongst the good in the same net, untill they be drawne to shoare at the end of the world, even, he *quem nihil fratrum laet*, who knoweth right well what they are, and what they will be, suffereth them not onely to enjoy being, but well being, all manner of outward blessings, causeth his Sun to shine, and his raine to raine upon them. yea Christ himselfe in the dayes of his flesh endured, even the contradiction of sinners, so that all those furious spirits, that seeke an immediate and utter eradication of the thorns, and if it lay in their power, would command fire from heaven to consume them, doe not imitate these blessed examples, show a great deale of non-proficiency in Christianity, as Saint *Austin*, *Qui ideo neminem vult pati hominem quia ut arbitratur multum proficit, per hoc ipsum quod alios non tolerat, ostendit quod potius non pro-*

*Math. 13. 30.
Aug. tom. 4. de
Catech. 13. rud.*

Aug. de tript. sen.

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Cyprian worthy to be written in letters of gold, *Esi videtur in Ecclesijs esse invidia, non caritas, impediens debet, aut fides aut charitas nostra, ut quoniam in ecclesia esse in Ecclesia* *Cyp. ep. 1. 3. ep. 2.*
cernimus, ipsi de Ecclesia recedimus. Nobis modo laborandum, ut frumentum esse possimus, ut cum caperis frumentum
Deminiis horreum, et di fructum pro opere nostro, & labore
capiamus. The being offeares in the field, the Church ought not to be a hindrance to our faith or charity, nor is a sufficient cause of our separation from the Church, we should rather labour to be good come our selves, that when the Harvest comes we may be gathered into Gods Barne. & there receive the fruit of our faith and obedience or further as he goes on, There be in a great house vessels of wood and earth, made for inferiour uses, and others of gold and silver made for honourable services: thus it is in Gods great house, the Church, we must labour to be vessels of honour, fit for our Masters use, and leave those of baser metall to his disposall, who will at his owntime breake them in peeces like a Potters vessel.

3. *Justin* thinks it spoken of the excellency & dignity of the Church in comparison of other Congregations, and of such as are not truly hers though mixed with hers, *Tantum superat Ecclesia ceteros omnes, et ut quantum Lilius spinas.* The Church doth as far excell all other Congregations in worth, as the Lily doth thorns. Our Saviour speaks of the Lily, that even *Solomon* in all his Royalty was not arrayed like one of them, if *Solomon* the most glorious Prince, in the height of his glory attained not to be lustre of the Lily: what a low ranke must the burr, bramble, a thorne be of, to the spirituall Lily? what is *Beethaven* to *Beethel*, the house of *Antion* to the house of God? the *Tents* of *Sudar* to the Tabernacle of Testimony? *Abana* and *Pharpar*, the puddle waters of *Damascus* to the cleare waters of *Israel*, the wells of salvation? glorious things are spoken of the City, the Church of God, as glorious she is, as the Sunne when he goes forth

Mat. 6. 29.

16 The splendour of the SPOUSE.

in his might, *Judges 5. 31.* nay, more glorious then the other Sunne, for she is clothed with the Sunne of righteousness, and the Moone under her feet. They say the Pope is greater then any Prince of the earth, by so many degrees as the Sunne is greater then the earth; let Parasites say what they will, we may truly lay the comparison, that the true Church of Christ doth infinitely excell that Antichristian Synagogue of Satan, and all prophane Congregations, though they assume to themselves never so many vaine titles of honour, as *Sancta Ecclesia Catholica Romana*, and so forth, and *Muselmanni*; as the Turkes title themselves true believers; yet are they all thornes to the pure Lily, the Church. If it be referred to the Daughters such as I have mentioned, that live within the pale of the visible Church, yet are not the peculiar Spouse of Christ. The truly Christian soule as farre exceeds them, as the Lily doth the thornes; what comparison is there betwixt the gold and the drosse? the wine and the lees? the faithfull Spouse of Christ, and the filthy harlot of the Devill? surely one little spot of ground *Goshen* that hath light in it, is worth all *Egypt* full of darkness, grosse and palpable. Learne we highly to esteeme these Lilies, and to prize these choyce jewels, and in whomsoever we see true grace, sanctity and justice, which two are the candour and odour of the Lily, to value them, though they be beset with never so many thornes of infirmities or adversities, let us account of them as they are, indeed the heires of heavens, the nobles of the world, for *Generosa Christi festa, nobilitat viros cui quisque servit ille vero est nobilis*, and the pledges of our peace, it may be the fire had beene before this time sent into the thornes, but that there are some Lilies amongst them to be preserved, and for their sakes God doth spare the thornes so long.

Our later Divines have observed many other reasons and respects why the Church may be said to be a Lily among

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among the thornes: I will onely rub some few of their eares of corne, and leave the harvest to some other choyce worke-man his gathering. *A Lily among thornes.*

4. In regard of the multitude of afflictions she suffereth in this life, for the Church hath ever beene like *Abrahams* Ram held in a thicket of adversity, *Christinus* is *Crutianus*, as *Luther* was wont to say, *h*a man of crosses. The servant is not above his master, God had but one only Son, and he was *sine peccato*, yet not *sine flagello*. *Aug. in Ps. 37.* Therefore let us take up our Crosse *ad idipsum* a day by day, *ut diadema sequitur, ita crux crucem accipiat* every day. *Luc. 9. 23.* day we must expect sufficient travell, and with patience let us possesse our soules for it, resolve that through many tribulation and afflictions, we must enter into Gods Kingdome, if we will have Christ, his Crowne of glory, *Acts, 14. 22.* we must be content to weare a crowne of thornes. For the Church is a Lily among thornes.

5. In regard of the manifold impediments she hath to hinder her spirituall growth, namely,

First, Satan is a blacke thorne in his temptations, alwayes pricking and wounding the children of God, yea biting at the very root of the Lily, like the worme at the root of *Jonahs* Gourd, and the Lily would as soone wither as that Gourd did, was there not a soveraigne power from above to preserve it, pray we then unto God to rebuke Satan in all his assaults, that our Lily may flourish in despite of him.

Secondly, naturall corruption which God hath left to be pricks in our eyes, and thornes in our sides. *Saint Paul*, that choyce vessell of grace complains of them, *Rom. 7.* I cary about me a body of sinne and death, he calls it by the very terme in my Text, the thorne in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, take we his course even to sollicite God by frequent prayer, till we have the same *2 Cor. 12. 7.* answer which he obtained, my grace shall be sufficient for thee, and begge of him who comes with healing in his

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wings to heale our damage, that it may not be so fruitfull in bringing forth these pricking thorns. S. Bernard particularizeth these to be *Amoris sceleratus immoderate* earthly desires, & worldly cogitations, which brings a barrennes of goodnes to the soule, and choak the seed of the word. *O mundi, mundi*, saith St. *Augustine*, *Fallax & proditor*, impure world, a traitor to us and a deceiver of us. It glues our wings, that we cannot soare upwards, and as he that hath a thorne in his foot is utterly unfit for travell; so he that hath these thorns of worldly cares stick in his soule, is unmoet for his journey to heaven. Let us therefore pluck out this thorne, and if riches enticasse, let not our heart upon them.

Math. 13.

Psal. 62. 10.

1 Sam. 23. 67.

Cant. 1. 6.

Psal. 119. 61.

Bern. in Cant.

Ser. 48.

Thirdly, the perverse and sinfull conversation of wicked men, which are thornes in our way to heaven, the sons of *Belial* shall be as thornes thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands, but the man that shall touch them must be fenced with Iron, and the staffe of a Speare. The Church complains that her mothers sons made her the keeper of the Vineyards, but her owne Vineyard she kept not, and hath not every member of the Church cause to complaine with *David*, the bands of wicked men have robbed me? Saint Bernard is seasonable for a close of this point, *Si Lilium est inter spinas videat unguis quo anima quam vigilem sollicitamque esse oporteat super custodia sui, septa undique spinis hinc inde aculeos intendentibus*, The Church is like a Lily beset round about with thornes, that seeke to wound and teare her, therefore let every soule be watchfull and carefull for the preservation of it selfe, that neither the thorne within doe imppoisson her, nor those other without doe pierce her to hinder her growth in grace here, or to deprive her of glory hereafter.

6. In regard of the small number of those that are the true members of the Church, in comparison of forreine Congregations without, and false brethren within, one

Lily

Lily many thorns. *Plus mali*, they which are evil, are the greatest number. There is much mold wherof earthen vessels are made, but little dust that gold cometh of, many ^{Aug.} *Eldras 8.* trees are planted, but few like that good tree bring forth fruit in their season; much seed in sowne, but three parts thereof miscary. Saint *Augustin* gives a good rule, *Noli in- Aug. in Ps. 39*
morari sed appendere, si utrum offer agram non dolofam, Doe not take them by number, but consider well of them, weigh them in the ballance of the Sanctuary, or else thou mistakest, then afterwards, *Noli imitari*: Doe not imitate them that be the most, or in words of holy writ. Thou shalt not follow a multitude to doo evil; the reason is given by one, *Est turba sum-Sancti- per argumentum pessimi*, the worse goe by heapes and troopes, the least are content in solitary, of twenty Kings of Israel, not one good was, cleave to the Lord with all his heart, of five hundred thousand Israelites, but two came into the Land of *Canaan*. It was a remarkable folly and punishment of *Rehoboam* King of *Frisie*, who asking whether there were most in heaven or hell, and was answered, that in hell was the greatest number, withdrew himselfe from holy baptisme, and professed plainly, that he would goe to hell, where the most company was, but he enjoyed his madness and contempt of Gods Ordinance but a short space, for the third day after, he dyed suddenly. It is better to be with *Noah* & his small family in the Arke, then with the whole world to be drowned in the deluge, to be planted in Gods garden with the Lily, then to be throwne into the fire with a whole wilderness of thorns.

7. Lastly, the Church is as the Lily among thorns in respect of her unity and their divisions and distractions, being torne in more pieces then the Prophet *Abijahs* garment was, *1 Kings 12*; for that was onely into twelve, but these are infinite, parted into as many severall conventicles are there be men of deeply corrupt minds, who doe *partes facere*, as Saint *Augustin* saith of the *Donatists*, and gather disciples unto themselves, *Quis possit singulas quasi harefes enumerare Aug. de unitate gentium singulararem?* saith Saint *Augustin*, who is able to *Ecclesia 4.3.* reckon

Aug. de unitate
Ecclesie, c. 3.
Daniel, 7.

reckon up all the heresies of these severall Sects, which hold not Jesus Christ, and are as whole beasts of burden, they are one from another, yet all against the Church, and are numbered in the Lilly, and folded together to doe us no harme, as the thornes are, they have *unitatem contra salutem*, as S. Augustine saith, I am sure *contra veritatem*, unity against truth, for our Saviour tells us not onely of many false Prophets, but of false Christs; But there is but one true Christ the head, and beleevers are the severall members of his mysticall body, united by faith to him their head, and in Christian charity one to another, and though there be threescore Quenes and threescore Concubines, and Virgins without number, yet is Christ his Spouse *una & unica*, one and the onely one of her husbands. And S. Paul tells us, that there is but one body, one Spirit, one hope of their spirituall calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptisme, one God and Father, of all who is above all, out

Nahum. 1. 19.

through all, and in all his children, therefore they ought all to be one, as our Saviour prayed for them five times in one Chapter, the very thornes will tell us in this duty, shall they be folded together to doe hurt, and shall not the Lillies hold together to preserve one another? This unity will make our colour more candid, our odour more fragrant, and fruitfulnessse, more seasonable and abundant. For *omnis pulchritudinis forma unitas*, unity is the forme of beauty and uniformity is the forme of unity, where there is *connum*, and *vianna*, one heart and one way, the carriage of things will be prosper us, the end comfortable, I will clofethen with that prayer of Saint Paul for the *Thessalonians*. Now the Lord of peace himselfe give us peace un

Cant. 6, 9.

alwayes, by all meanes, and that for Jesus Christ his sake, the Prince of peace, who dearly bought our peace by his precious blood, to whom with the Father and the holy-Ghost, be given all glory, dominion, might, majesty, and thanksgiving from this time forth and for evermore. Amen.

Eph. 4. 4, 5.
Iohn, 17.

as Thefl. 3. 15.

Aug. ep. 15.
Hicronymus.

FINIS.

